



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA ALLOWS DROPWORT LEAVES WITH STEMS FROM KOREA UNDER STREAMLINED PROCESS

WASHINGTON, March 24, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced that it will begin issuing permits under the agency's new streamlined process for commercial shipments from Korea of dropwort leaves with stems into the continental United States. Dropwort leaves and stems are vegetables commonly used in Korean dishes.

APHIS published the pest risk analysis for dropwort leaves and stems from Korea on Nov. 21, 2007. Based on the analysis, APHIS determined that dropwort leaves from Korea can be safely imported into the United States subject to one or more of five designated phytosanitary measures, and therefore are eligible for the new notice-based approval process.

To be eligible for importation, the dropwort leaves must be part of a commercial shipment and be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the Korean National Plant Protection Organization certifying that the commodity is a product of the Republic of Korea. In addition, the certificate must include an additional declaration that states, "The water dropwort (*Oenanthe javanica*) in this shipment was inspected and considered free from Water Dropwort Witches' Broom and *Puccinia oenanthes-stoloniferae*." The shipment is also subject to inspection at the port of entry.

In July 2007, USDA published a final rule which streamlined an approval process for importing certain fruits and vegetables under what is known as the Quarantine 56 (Q56) regulations. Q56 pertains to the prohibitions and restrictions concerning the importation of fruits and vegetables into the United States. While this new process continues to provide stringent protections for U.S. agriculture, it employs notices rather than lengthier rulemaking to solicit public involvement in the approval process. It is a less time-consuming approach that allows USDA plant health specialists to focus on more complex domestic and import issues.

Under the new process, a commodity becomes eligible if the risk analysis demonstrates that it can be brought safely into the United States subject to one or more of the five designated phytosanitary measures. The measures include port-of-entry inspection; approved postharvest treatment; a phytosanitary certificate verifying that the commodity originated from a pest-free area; as well as a phytosanitary certificate verifying that the commodity is free from a specified pest or pests or that the risk associated with the commodity can be mitigated through commercial practices. A notice announcing the availability of the pest risk analysis then is published in the *Federal Register* with the opportunity for public comment.

After the comment period ends, all comments are considered and if appropriate, a notice is published in the *Federal Register* announcing that USDA will begin issuing import permits for the commodity.

To learn more about the revisions made to USDA's fruit and vegetable regulations, please go to www.aphis.usda.gov and click on the Quarantine 56 hot issues link.

Notice was published in the March 20 *Federal Register* and becomes effective upon publication.

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